



2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown

Presented by Got To Be NC Agriculture

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association Chef Showdown is North Carolina's premier culinary competition open to all professional chefs and mixologists currently working in North Carolina and distilleries based in North Carolina.

The 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown will take place Monday August 9, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., at Bay 7 at the American Tobacco District in downtown Durham, NC.

North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association is the uniting force of the North Carolina hospitality industry. The Association brings together restaurant and lodging establishments and partners who support our hospitality community. NCRLA impacts legislation and policies, cultivates relationships and provides valuable resources to help members run their businesses.

General Competition Rules and Procedures

- North Carolina Chefs, distilleries, and mixologists may apply to compete through an online application process at www.NCChefShowdown.com. Applications must be completed in their entirety.
- Applications will be accepted through March 22, 2021. NCRLA may extend the application period if necessary.
- Past chefs, distilleries and mixologists who have won the grand titles may not apply again until they are two years removed from their awards, even if they have changed venues/employers.



- Submission of participant application gives NCRLA the right to use each applicant's name, likeness and background details as provided above for any promotional materials related to this event, including but not limited to, use online, printed materials, video, social media, press releases and advertisements. This information will also be shared with event sponsors.
- All participants agree to be photographed or taped for marketing or promotional purposes during the competition events.
- Chefs, distilleries, and mixologists competing certify that they meet all eligibility requirements and that participation is not in violation of any employment or other agreement.
- If a chef or mixologist is representing a restaurant, restaurant group, or distillery, NCRLA requests that the restaurant submit a high-resolution version of their logo for marketing and promotional use, and requests that the establishment commit to promote the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown using both external and internal marketing channels.
- All participants will be asked to sign liability waivers at each venue. Every effort has been made to make all phases of this competition safe events; however, competitors waive all liability claims that may arise from participation in this event, including injury.
- NCRLA reserves the right to reassign dates or replace chefs should it become necessary (i.e. a chef must dropout, becomes ill, or is in violation of any competition rules, etc.)
- NCRLA will not be liable for cancellation or postponement in the event of acts of God or unforeseen national or regional events that are out of the control of organizers.
- During each level of the 2021 competition series, every effort will be made to keep venues sanitized between competitors and to keep participating chefs, judges and NCRLA staff socially distanced.
- Participating chefs, judges, mixologists and distilleries will be required to be participants in North Carolina's Count On Me NC program.



- All participants, judges, media, guests and members of the NCRLA team will be required to wear masks at each level of competition, with the exception of the time that judges are tasting each dish.

General Information for Chefs

- In each round, it is imperative that chefs and their assistants comply with the current rules and regulations of the North Carolina Food Code. Proper safety and sanitation protocols should remain a priority at all times. Gloves and masks must be worn during prep and service to judges and will be provided for your use in the kitchen. Please use processes in the competition kitchen that you would in your restaurant kitchen when serving the public.
- Chefs who are entering to compete for the title of NCRLA Chef of the Year must present a savory dish. Chefs who apply to compete for the title of NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year must present a dessert.
- Savory or sweet, chefs must feature as many North Carolina proteins, produce or products as possible in the dishes presented, at the preliminary and regional rounds of competition and at the finale event, highlighting local and regional farmers and producers on the plate.
- In order to assure there is a wide assortment of proteins & flavor in each round of competition, chefs will be asked to select from a choice of proteins as presented by the NCRLA. Protein requests in each round will be honored on a first come first served basis.
- Chefs who qualify for the regionals may request to use the same protein as they did in the preliminary round, but they must make a different dish. Once again, proteins will be available on a first come, first served basis. Chefs must recreate their regional round dish at the finale, but may make seasonal changes as approved by the NCRLA.



- From the applications received, a maximum of 48 chefs will be invited to compete in one of four preliminary rounds.
- The preliminary rounds for the 2021 series will take place in one of four North Carolina regions at these specific venues:
 - For the Carolina Coast: Carteret Community College in Morehead City, NC on April 26
 - For Charlotte Metro & the Mountain Region: Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC, May 17
 - For the Triad Region: Bobby Boys Bakeshop in Winston-Salem, NC, June 7
 - For the Triangle Region: Wake Technical Community College, School of Baking & Pastry, June 14
- The regional rounds for the 2021 series will take place in one of two North Carolina regions at these specific venues:
 - For Western NC: Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC, July 12
 - For Eastern NC: Wake Technical Community College, School of Baking & Pastry, July 19
- When applying, chefs must agree to be available the day of their specific preliminary and regional round as well as the finale event on Monday, August 9, 2021, at Bay 7 in downtown Durham.
- Each competing chef may have one sous chef or assistant in the kitchen to help prep and prepare the food to present at preliminary and regional rounds, and the finale event.
- Chefs selected to participate in the preliminary rounds will be notified three weeks prior to the event date.
- Preliminary rounds winners will be announced April 5.
- The top-scoring 20 chefs from the four preliminary rounds will receive the honor of being invited to compete in one of two regional rounds of competition. They will also be



invited to participate in the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown finale, where they will prepare and serve their dish in sample-sized portions to 200-300 guests who will be in attendance.

- Based on regional scoring, the NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year will be announced the evening of Aug 9, 2021 at the finale event of the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown.
- At the finale, all participating chefs will compete for People's Choice awards.
- 2021-2022 North Carolina Department of Agriculture Chef Ambassadors will also be announced at the finale. This honor is explained in Appendix C.
- All winners will be announced the evening of Aug 9, 2021. Contestants must be present to win.
- If at any time, a participating chef is no longer available to compete, the chef or the restaurant must let NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers know immediately. Chefs and restaurants may not sub in another chef.
- In the preliminary and regional rounds, chefs will not be reimbursed by NCRLA for any expenses for food, travel, parking, ingredients or labor associated with participation.
- Chefs will be introduced to the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown pantry sponsors who have agreed to help with product if a chef is interested. Use of these suppliers is not required nor will it be judged any differently than any other North Carolina products, protein or produce.
- In the finale, chefs will receive a grocery stipend of \$400 for savory chefs and \$300 for pastry chefs. To receive the grocery reimbursement, participating chefs, distilleries and mixologists will be sent a NCRLA reimbursement form, which is required to be returned to NCRLA **with receipts of purchased product** attached by August 27. Pre-payment is not available. Reimbursements will be mailed no later than September 10.



See rules specific to preliminary & regional rounds in appendix A.

See rules specific to the finale event on Aug. 10 in appendix B.

General Information for Distilleries

- From the applications received, six North Carolina distilleries and mixologists pairings will be invited to participate in the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown.
- Mixologists and Distilleries must apply as a team. Either the mixologist or the distillery may initiate the application.
- Each distillery will partner with a North Carolina mixologist who will create a craft cocktail featuring at least one of the distillery's spirits combined with as many locally sourced ingredients as possible.
- All participating mixologists must be 21 years of age or older.
- Competitors MUST adhere to the same NC food code standards they would in their own restaurant or bar.
- Mixologists must check in at the venue, Bay 7, between 2 - 3 p.m.
- All participants must be ready for photos and announcements at 4 p.m., at which time they may not leave the building until the completion of the event.
- Each mixologist will be allowed up to one assistant to help create and serve 200-300 sample-sized portions of your cocktail to event guests.
- At the finale event, each mixologist will present to a panel of three judges, serving each a full-sized, fully garnished cocktail, as well as a fourth cocktail to be photographed.
- Based on the vote of the judges, one mixologist will be named 2021 NCRLA Mixologist of the Year, and the sponsoring distillery will be named the 2021 NCRLA Distillery of the Year. All competing distilleries and mixologists will also be in the running for the People's Choice award.



- To participate, distilleries agree to be named as a sponsor of the event. Each participating distillery/mixologist team will receive a \$200 stipend for product used for the finale. No reimbursement is available from the NCRLA for travel, lodging, labor or any other expenses accrued for either the distillery or the mixologist's participation in the competition.
- To receive the grocery reimbursement, participating chefs, distilleries and mixologists will be sent a NCRLA reimbursement form, which is required to be returned to NCRLA **with receipts of purchased product** attached by August 27. Pre-payment is not available. Reimbursements will be mailed no later than September 10.
- NCRLA will provide each distillery/mixologist pairing with an individual bar, non-slip floor mats, plastic serving ware, ice and cocktail napkins.
- Mixologists are responsible for bringing their own ingredients, tools and other specialty items required to create their cocktail. The ice provided by the venue is not specialty ice.
- In addition to sourcing from local farms, mixologists will be given a list of Pantry Sponsors who would be delighted to provide North Carolina product for use in cocktails served at the event. Use of these suppliers is not required nor will it be judged any differently than any other North Carolina products, protein or produce.
- Detailed recipes for each competition cocktail are due to Heidi Billotto by July 23 (heidibillotto@gmail.com).
- Distillery/mixologist are encouraged to decorate their bar, however, the use of large signage and banners must be approved in advance by NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers.
- Electrical equipment, such as sous vide machines, popcorn machines, mixers, blenders, electric coil or solid burners or induction burners are allowed. Portable fryers and deep-fried ingredients are not permitted. A list of electrical needs is required to be given to Heidi Billotto three weeks prior to the Aug 9 event for approval.



- A dishwasher on staff at the host venue will be on hand and available to mixologists. Should a mixologist require dish washing, a bus tub is required clearly labeled with the mixologist name and distillery. You must provide your own, labeled bus tub.
- Reimbursement is NOT AVAILABLE for travel, lodging, labor or any other expenses accrued for participation in the NCRLA Chef Showdown, however NCRLA will do its very best to work with area hotels to provide lodging for mixologists & distillery representatives traveling from more than 60 miles away, at the very best discounted rates available. NCRLA will get information to all participants for whom this applies as soon as we have it in hand.

Judging and Scoring – All Competitors

- Scoring at the preliminary and regional rounds for the competing chefs, and for mixologists and distilleries at the finale, will be based on the best use of Got to be NC North Carolina ingredients, execution, creativity, originality, presentation and overall taste.

Parking – All Competitors

- Detailed parking information and load in and load out instructions will be shared with competitors prior to each event. Parking at the finale is available in nearby parking decks. There may be a fee for parking. Plan accordingly.

Event Tickets – All Competitors

- The preliminary and regional events are not open to the public. Please refer to the rules in Appendix A specific to the preliminary and regional rounds for guest information.
- Tickets for the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown Aug 9 finale may be purchased online at www.NCChefShowdown.com. There are no discounted rates available.



- Participating chefs, sous chefs, mixologists, mixologist assistant, and one distillery representative are not required to purchase tickets for the event.
- Each participating chef, mixologist, and distillery representative will receive one (1) plus-one ticket to the 2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown.

Questions? Call or email Heidi Billotto, NCRLA Chef Showdown host and co-organizer, at 704-502-4439 or heidibillotto@gmail.com OR Laura Hayden, NCRLA co-organizer and NCRLA Special Events & Project Manager, at 919-424-0676 or lhayden@ncrla.org.

APPENDIX A.

Additional Chef Rules and Information for Preliminary & Regional

Rounds:

- At preliminary and regional rounds of competition, chefs will present to a panel of professional judges. A chef will present every 15-20 minutes throughout the day. Once chefs have been selected to participate in the preliminary or regional rounds, each chef will be assigned a specific presentation time.
- For each preliminary and regional round of competition, chefs and their assistants are asked to arrive at the host venue 1.5 hours prior to their presentation time, unless another time frame is agreed upon by chefs and NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers.
- Chefs will be provided with a list of available equipment in the host venue kitchen. Otherwise, chefs are responsible for bringing their own ingredients, tools and other specialty items required to create their dish.
- Chefs may not use permanent or portable oil fryers and may not bring in any deep-fried product to be presented as a part of their competition dish.



- Chefs must submit the name and descriptive of their dish and list of ingredients one week prior to their competition date. Adjustments may be made to your ingredient list as needed prior to judging.
- In order to assure there is a wide assortment of proteins & flavor in each round of competition, chefs will be asked to select from a choice of proteins as presented by the NCRLA. Protein requests in each round will be honored on a first come first served basis.
- Chefs who move on to the regionals may request to use the same protein as they did in the preliminary round, but they must make a different dish. Once again, proteins will be available on a first come, first served basis. Chefs must recreate their regional round dish at the finale, but may make seasonal changes as approved by the NCRLA. Name of the regional round dish and a list of ingredients are due to Heidi Billotto on July 2 (heidibillotto@gmail.com).
- Chefs must bring their own plates for presentation to judges and for the photo plate in each of the preliminary and regional rounds.
- To save on time and kitchen space, it is strongly suggested that chefs come with mise en place and any other component of the dish that may take some time to bake, cook or freeze, already prepared.
- A dishwasher on staff at the host venue will be on hand and available to chefs.
- A server on staff at the host venue will be on hand to help the chef serve the judges.
- Chefs are solely responsible for cleaning their work stations and keeping up with all of their belongings.
- While the participating chef is presenting to the judges, the sous chef or assistant will be charged with cleaning the workstation and packing things up in a timely fashion, leaving the space in the same condition in which it was found.
- Chefs may bring one sous chef or assistant to help in the kitchen.
- Chefs may bring up to one guest to observe the presentation, take photographs,



promote on social media, etc., however these guests are not allowed in the kitchen and food photos in the preliminary rounds should not be shared publicly. You must notify Heidi Billotto prior to event if you will have a guest with you.

- Participating chefs and their guests must leave the venue once an individual chef's presentation is complete.
- No reimbursements for product, travel, lodging, labor or any other expenses accrued for participation will be offered by the NCRLA for the preliminary or regional rounds.

APPENDIX B.

Chef Rules for the August 9 finale

- Chefs must check in at the venue, Bay 7, between 2 - 3 p.m.
- All participants must be ready for photos and announcements at 4 p.m., at which time they may not leave the building until the completion of the event.
- Chefs are required to cook the same dish they did in the regional round, making seasonal changes as approved by the NCRLA.
- If needed, participating chefs traveling in from out of town may have access to the kitchens, coolers and freezers at Bay 7. Those arrangements and specific needs will need to be made with Heidi Billotto two weeks prior to competition date.
- Participating chefs must be prepared to serve a sample-sized portion to 200-300 guests.
- In addition to sourcing from local farms, chefs will be given a list of Pantry Sponsors who would be delighted to provide North Carolina product for use in dishes served at the event. Use of these suppliers is not required, nor will it be judged any differently than any other North Carolina products, protein or produce.



- Chefs are responsible for bringing their own ingredients, tools and other specialty items required to create their dish.
- Chefs are encouraged to decorate booth/table space to represent their restaurants. The use of large signage and banners must be approved in advance by NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers.
- Chefs may not use oil fryers at the competition facility.
- Electrical equipment, such as sous vide machines, popcorn machines, mixers, electric coil or solid burners or induction burners are allowed. A list of electrical needs is required to be given to Heidi Billotto on July 19, three weeks prior to the August 9 finale, and must be approved for use. A limited number of electrical outlets will be available at the finale and will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.
- A dishwasher on staff at the host venue will be on hand and available to chefs. Should chefs require dish washing, a bus tub is required clearly labeled with the chef name and restaurant. You must provide your own, labeled bus tub.
- Chefs are solely responsible for their belongings.
- To receive the grocery reimbursement, participating chefs, distilleries and mixologists will be sent a NCRLA reimbursement form, which is required to be returned to NCRLA **with receipts of purchased product** attached by August 27. Pre-payment is not available. Reimbursements will be mailed no later than September 10.
- Reimbursement is NOT AVAILABLE for travel, lodging, labor or any other expenses accrued for participation in the NCRLA Chef Showdown; however, NCRLA will do its very best to work with area hotels to provide lodging for chefs traveling from more than 60 miles away, at the very best discounted rates available. We will get information to all participants for whom this applies as soon as we have it in hand.



APPENDIX C.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture Chef Ambassadorship

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture's mission is to develop and expand markets through domestic and international channels for North Carolina's food, fiber and forestry products.

Recognizing the valuable impact chefs throughout the state can have on the achievement of that mission, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture Markets Division has created a Culinary Ambassador Team. This team of talented culinarians will serve to support the department's efforts to promote the use of North Carolina food and beverage. Only six North Carolina chefs will be honored with the distinction of being awarded a spot on the team of culinary ambassadors each year.

The annual North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association (NCRLA) Chef Showdown competition will serve as the mechanism to build this highly regarded six-member team. As a part of the NCRLA Chef Showdown prize package, both the winner and the runner-up for the titles of NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year, will be conferred with the prestigious position of North Carolina Culinary Ambassador.

With those titles, these chefs will be awarded the honor of wearing the coveted blue chef coat with the distinctive NC Culinary Ambassador logo. In addition, the People's Choice category winners for Best Savory Chef and Best Pastry Chef will be awarded positions as North Carolina Culinary Ambassadors. However, if the People's Choice award winners are the same as the first place and runner up of NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year, the



competition third place runner-up for each title will be awarded the Ambassadorship. Chefs will serve as North Carolina Culinary Ambassadors for a one-year term, from August - July.

This elite team of chefs will be the culinary voice of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Their job: to advocate the use of North Carolina food and beverage products in restaurants and retail outlets across the state. The team will also assist in the department's marketing efforts on an as needed schedule, based on availability, thru cooking demonstrations, television and video appearances, educational discussions on healthy eating, seasonal recipe development and the general promotion of North Carolina's food and agricultural industries.

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